FIRST COMICS
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NO. 8
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WARP
BRUNNER

FIRST NOTES

A BIT OF HISTORY

At the Chicago Minicon last April (last week to me), a bunch of fans asked me if I knew why comic books are cover-dated so far in advance. I told them the story I believe to be true — my own personal knowledge of magazine distribution and depression-era media makes me think this story is true. But it has taken on mythic proportions.

First, the situation: It is July, and you are reading a comic book cover-dated November. Four months ahead.

The first *regularly published* comic book is generally considered to be Famous Funnies, which was launched as a one-shot in 1933.

(Funnies On Parade is considered the first comic book, but it never went beyond one issue. It, too, was published in 1933 — so this year, 1983, is the 50th anniversary of comic books.)

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A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

After a number of single issues, the monthly run of Famous Funnies started in May, 1934 — cover dated July.

At the time, it was traditional for magazines to be cover-dated the month the magazine was to go off-sale: if the book was a monthly and it went on sale in May, it would be cover-dated in June. When June came around and the news dealer was trying to make room for new issues, he'd pull off everything dated May and most magazines dated June that looked like they had been around for a while.

In those days, comics were put in the pulp magazine racks, and by being dated a month ahead, they somehow seemed newer. Young readers felt they were getting the jump on things by buying a "July" issue amidst all those "June" magazines.

This lesson wasn't lost on the other, newer comics publishers. When one of them came out with a bi-monthly, they dated it still an additional month ahead: an August book among all those July comics that went on sale in May — three months.

During the next, oh, 40 years, some publishers caught on to this trick, and a great many of them standardized their line at that three-months ahead date. To the best of my recollection, the last holdout, DC Comics, equalized their bi-monthly and monthly cover-dates sometime in the mid-1970s.

But by that time, an additional month was put into the formula. I seem to remember Marvel Comics skipping a month's cover-date in the early 1970s, but if that actually happened or it was merely a fanzine-published rumor, I really can't say. But that fourth month did come in there.

All of this nonsense really started in the 1930s, when comic book issue numbers weren't all that important. And due to various scheduling and competitive pressures, that two months gap between on-sale month and cover-date month stretched to four.

When First Comics started up, we had a short discussion about cover-dates. We realized we had the opportunity to cut through 50 years of nonsense by merely cover-dating the off-sale date: if the book comes out in July, it would be cover-dated August and not November.

But we really didn't see it that way. It wasn't 50 years of nonsense. Not really. It was 50 years of tradition. Comic books are *supposed* to be cover-dated a light-year in advance.

So our object is to increase the gap between on-sale date and cover-date, so that within ten years the cover-date is a full year ahead. You'll buy a July-dated comic book in July — but it will be dated the following year.

There's just a fine line between nonsense and tradition.

JUST A NOTE...

... to thank everybody who responded to my "serious editorial" several months ago. We've received a ton of comment, most along with letters to various First Comics published that month, and some folks who specifically wrote in just to comment on the editorial.

The mail was 100% positive. Take that, video book burners.

— Mike Gold

ON SALE NOW

American Flagg #2: It's "Jukebox Saturday Night!", the second chapter of **Howard Chaykin's** kick-off three-parter. And if you thought it was hitting the fan at the end of last month's issue, Chaykin's got more than just a few surprises in store for you!

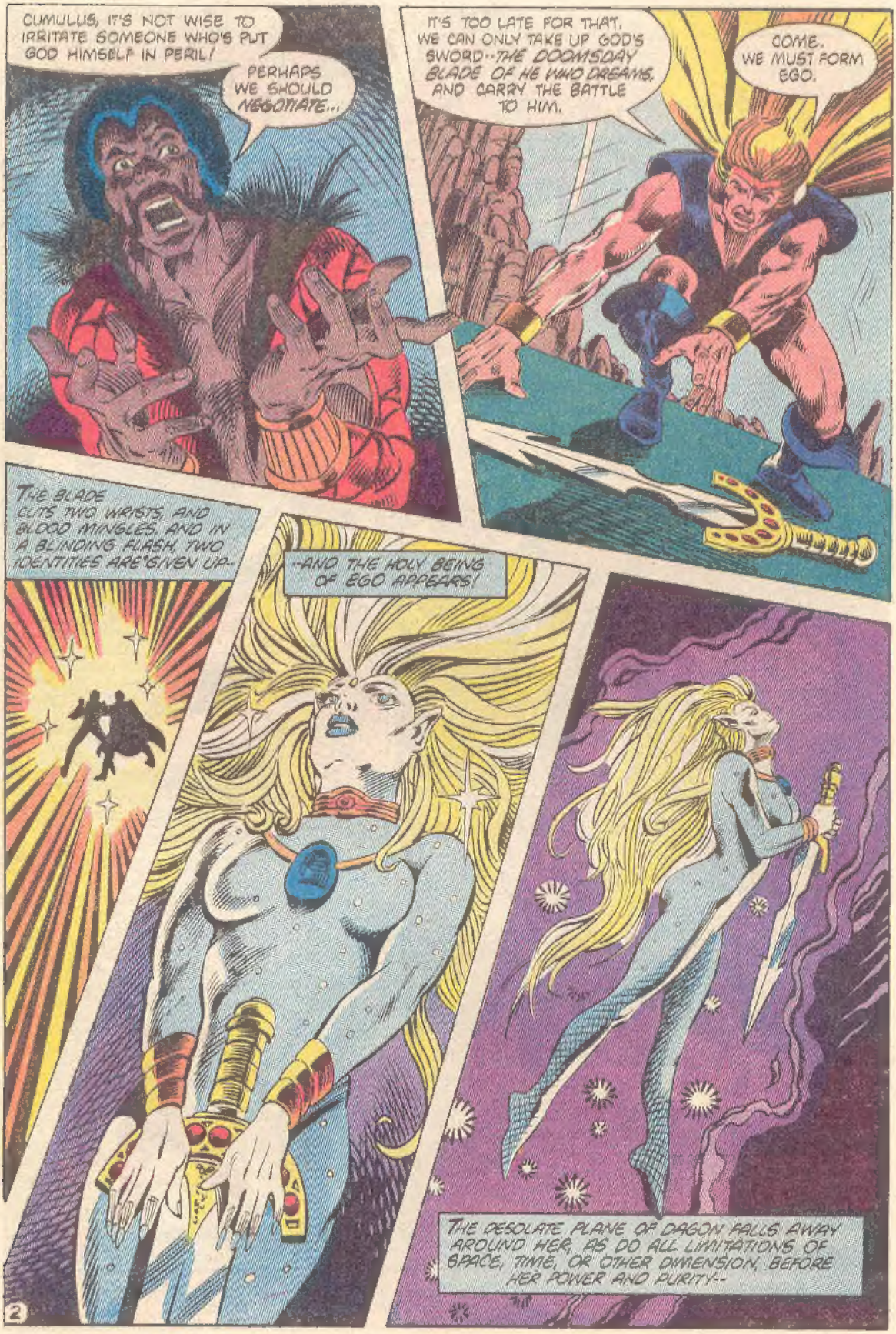
Jon Sable, Freelance #6: The conclusion to the most dramatic origin story of all! "A Deadly Shade of Violet" — part four of the origin of **Mike Grell's** Jon Sable! If you haven't been following this thriller, you've been missing one of the most successful new titles of the year!

ALSO FIRST IN JULY

Starslayer #10: Two important introductions this time around: Meet Black Thorn — **Starslayer** certainly will — in the latest mini-epic from **John Ostrander, Lenin Delsol** and **Mike Gustovich** ... and meet **Grimjack** — the newest and most central hero from **Ostrander, Timothy Truman** ... and First Comics!

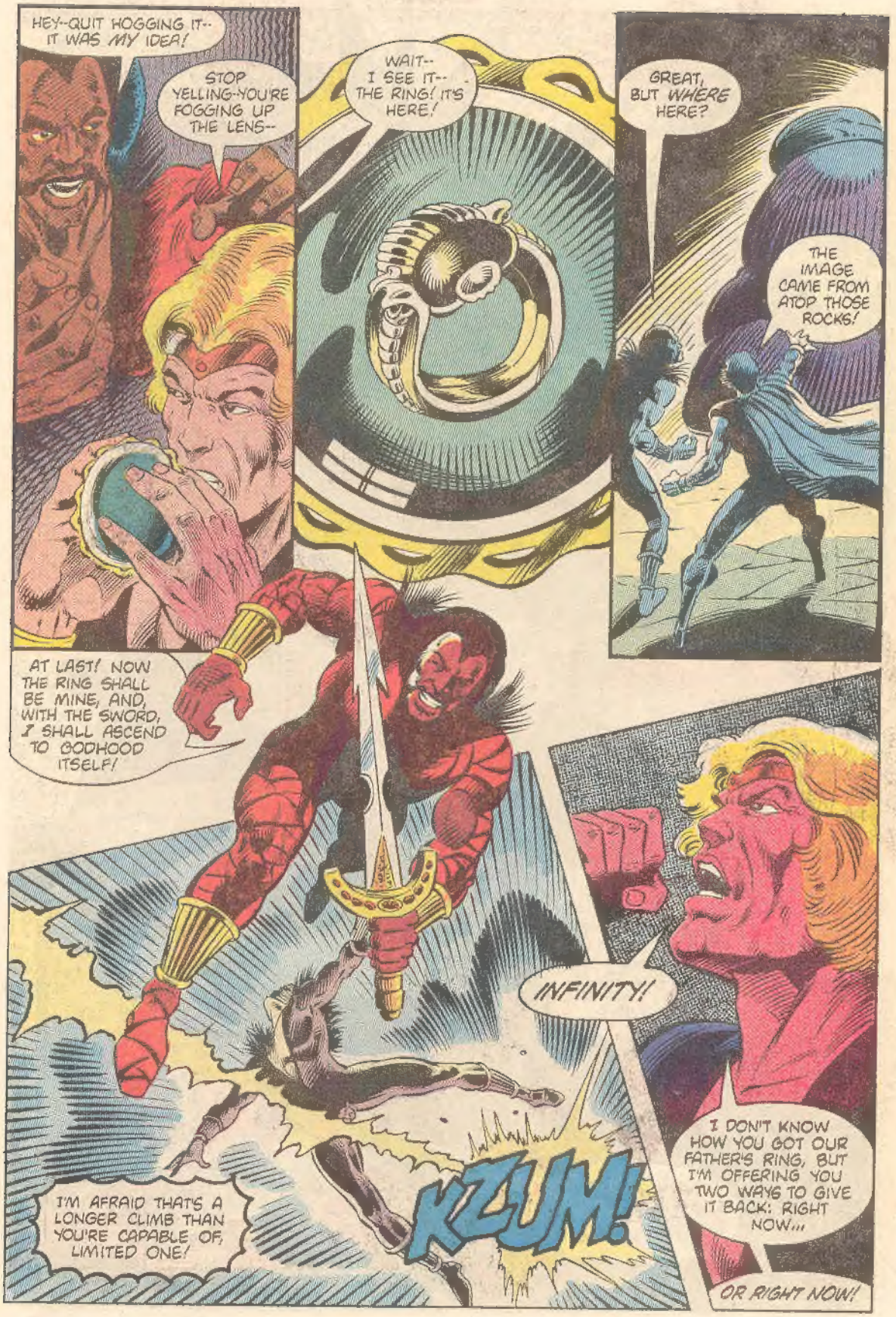
E-Man #8: If you're looking for a solid new super-villain, somebody who can really present a challenge for America's supercharged superhero, then you'll want to meet the latest **Martin Pasko/Joe Staton** creation, Alien Hot Wax! Plus: in the final page, **Joshua Quagmire's Cutey Bunny!**

PARADOX LOST!
PART 8
GO AHEAD, INFINITY! LAUGH! LAUGH ALL YOU WANT!
BUT MY BROTHER CHAOS AND I HAVE VANQUISHED XANDER, AND WE HAVE BESTED DAGON! AND WE WILL NOT STOP TILL WE HAVE BEATEN YOU!
WARP
BASED ON THE PLAYS BY STUART GORDON & BURY ST. EDMUND
FRANK BRUNNER ADAPTATION/PENCILS . PETER GILLIS SCRIPT . MIKE GUSTOVICH INKS . KEN BRUZENAK LETTERS . JANICE COHEN COLORS . MIKE GOLD EDITOR


CUMULUS, IT'S NOT WISE TO IRRITATE SOMEONE WHO'S PUT GOD HIMSELF IN PERIL!
PERHAPS WE SHOULD NEGOTIATE...
IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT. WE CAN ONLY TAKE UP GOD'S SWORD--THE DOOMSDAY BLADE OF HE WHO DREAMS, AND CARRY THE BATTLE TO HIM.
COME. WE MUST FORM EGO.
THE BLADE CUTS TWO WRISTS, AND BLOOD MINGLES, AND IN A BLINDING FLASH, TWO IDENTITIES ARE GIVEN UP--
--AND THE HOLY BEING OF EGO APPEARS!
THE DESOLATE PLANE OF DAGON FALLS AWAY AROUND HER, AS DO ALL LIMITATIONS OF SPACE, TIME, OR OTHER DIMENSION, BEFORE HER POWER AND PURITY--
2

AS UNIVERSE BEYOND UNIVERSE, WARP BEYOND WARP, YIELD THEMSELVES UP BEFORE THE VERY DAUGHTER OF HE WHO DREAMS!
FINALLY, THE MARCH OF WORLDS SLOWS, AS THE PROPER PLACE PRESENTS ITSELF.
EGO'S TIME IS NOT YET. SO AGAIN SHE MUST SHEAR APART--
--INTO LORD CUMULUS AND PRINCE CHAOS!
SEE ANYTHING THAT LOOKS LIKE OUR FATHER'S RING?
I DON'T SEE MUCH OF ANYTHING...
BRRAP!
WHAT WAS THAT?
HEY, IT WASN'T ME!
SO WHERE ARE--! YAWN! --WE?
3

LOOKS LIKE... NOWHERE... ZZZZZZ
ZZZZZZZZ...
SO WHERE ARE WE?
LOOKS LIKE NOWHERE.
NOWHERE-- NO RING--NO INFINITY! BUT EGO MUST HAVE HAD A REASON FOR DUMPING US HERE!
BRRAP
SURE-- MAYBE SHE HAD TO MAKE A REST STOP. IT'S THE PERFECT PLACE FOR IT.
THE AMULET OF THREEFOLD WISDOM-- IT PENETRATED THE COSMIC CRYSTAL--IT UNRAVELLED THE MESSAGE OF HE WHO DREAMS--ITS LAST TASK MAY BE TO LOCATE THE RING!
--PERHAPS FROM... THE AMULET?
THE AMULET! OF COURSE!
STOP CRITICIZING THE DECOR AND HELP ME FIGURE OUT HOW TO LOCATE THE RING OF HE WHO DREAMS!
IN THIS MURK-- YES--THE PROPER ILLUMINATION IS NEEDED--
4


HEY--QUIT HOGGING IT-- IT WAS MY IDEA!
STOP YELLING--YOU'RE FOGGING UP THE LENS--
WAIT-- I SEE IT-- THE RING! IT'S HERE!
GREAT, BUT WHERE HERE?
THE IMAGE CAME FROM ATOP THOSE ROCKS!
AT LAST! NOW THE RING SHALL BE MINE, AND, WITH THE SWORD, I SHALL ASCEND TO GODHOOD ITSELF!
INFINITY!
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT OUR FATHER'S RING, BUT I'M OFFERING YOU TWO WAYS TO GIVE IT BACK: RIGHT NOW...
OR RIGHT NOW!
KZUM!
I'M AFRAID THAT'S A LONGER CLIMB THAN YOU'RE CAPABLE OF, LIMITED ONE!

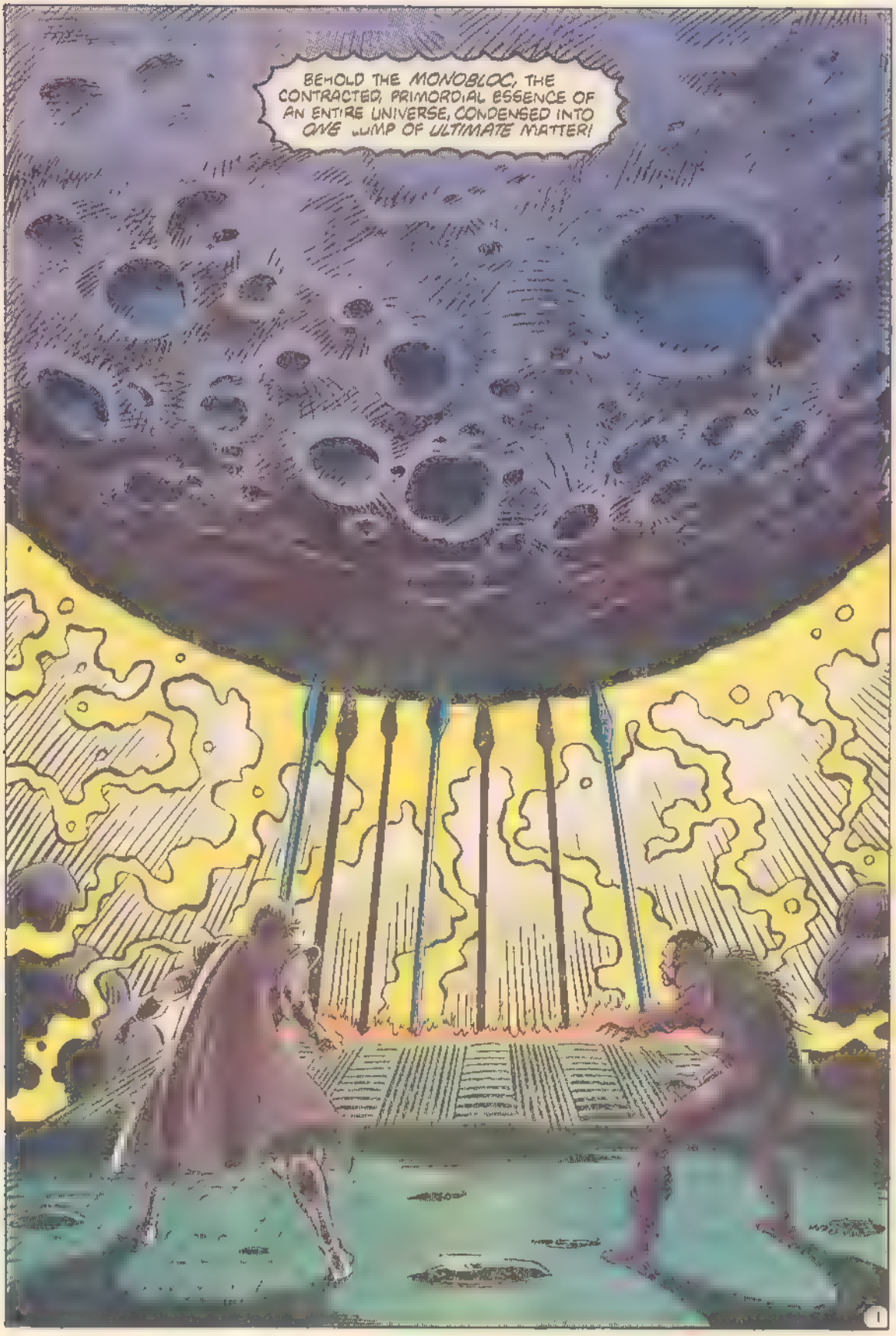
DO YOU MEAN TO TAKE THE RING--FROM ME?
I AM INFINITY! I AM ALL THAT EVER CAN BE! I STAND ASTRIDE ALL THE MYRIAD WAYS OF REALITY, AND NO MERE BEING CAN CONCEIVE MY POWER, LET ALONE MATCH IT! AND YOU CHALLENGE ME?
I APOLOGIZE FOR MY THOUGHTS ON NEGOTIATION, BROTHER.
MARK THIS DAY DOWN IN YOUR BOOK, FOR TODAY WE PUT AN END TO INFINITY!

AND HOW WOULD YOU--FEARLESS ARMY OF TWO--GO ABOUT THE OXYMORONIC TASK OF 'ENDING INFINITY?'
YOU DARE IMPLY THAT ANYTHING IS BEYOND CHAOS' GOD-SPAWNED INTELLECT?
--WHO HAD TO TURN INTO A LITTLE GIRL TO DEFEAT XANDER AND WHO COWERED BEHIND CUMULUS AT THE MERE SIGHT OF DAGON?
THAT YOU ARE THE OFFSPRING OF HE WHO DREAMS ONLY PROVES THAT HE'S BEEN SLUMMING AGAIN!
THAT DOES IT, SPACE-FACE!
YOU'RE DEAD MEAT!
TRUE--AMONG OTHER THINGS, I AM EVERYTHING.
YOU, HOWEVER, SHALL BE DEAD MEAT AND NOTHING ELSE.
DROP HIM, INFINITY!
WHEN I'M DONE WITH HIM.
NOW.. OR YOU DIE!
I WARNED YOU!
7

NICE SHOT--THAT'S ANOTHER LIFE I OWE YOU
YOU'RE LUCKY MY REFLEXES ARE SHARPER THAN MY MEMORY, CHAOS.
A MAGNIFICENT BLOW, CUMULUS--IT KILLED ME THOROUGHLY. BUT YOU'D HAVE TO REPEAT IT AN INFINITE NUMBER OF TIMES BEFORE IT AFFECTS ME!
AN INFINITY OF TIMES OR TWICE THAT--I'M READY!
WERE YOUR MATHEMATICS THE EQUAL OF YOUR ENTHUSIASM, YOU MIGHT ALMOST BE WORTH KILLING! ALMOST!
WHY, YOU--!
NO. SAVE IT, HE'S RIGHT. HE HAS AN INFINITE NUMBER OF REALITIES TO DRAW ON; IF WE BEAT HIM IN ONE REALITY, HE JUST SWITCHES OVER TO ANOTHER ONE IN WHICH WE LOST.
8

MOST PERCEPTIVE. BUT, BEING WHAT I AM, PROBABILITIES HOLD A GREAT FASCINATION FOR ME: SPECIFICALLY WAGERS. BETS.
YOU CANNOT TAKE THE RING BY FORCE, BUT YOU MAY WIN IT BY CHANCE. I PROPOSE A GAME IN WHICH THE WINNER GETS THE RING AND HIS LIFE, THE LOSER A SUITABLY MORBOSE FUNERAL.
NO DICE, FRIEND. DEATH IS NO FAIR STAKES FOR SOMEONE WHO DOES AS PROMISCUOUSLY AS YOU DO
YOU MISUNDERSTAND. IT IS NOT A CONTEST BETWEEN YOU AND ME THAT I PROPOSE--
--BUT ONE BETWEEN YOU AND YOU.
NO! NO MATTER THE STAKES--NO MATTER THE CAUSE--I WILL NOT KILL MY BROTHER!
WHAT A GUY
NO ONE SAID ANYTHING ABOUT KILLING ALL THAT IS REQUIRED IS THAT ONE OF YOU DIES
PUT IT THIS WAY: THE RANSOM OF THE RING OF HE WHO DREAMS IS THE LIFE OF ONE OF HIS SONS.

THIS STINKS
ACCURATE, BUT HARDLY CONSTRUCTIVE.
BANDA SENT THE TWO OF US--
BUT HE DON'T SAY HOW MANY HE EXPECTED BACK.
WHAT GOOD ARE THE SWORD AND RING IF WE CAN'T FORM EGO AND BRING THEM TO OUR FATHER?
HE ONLY SAID, "FULFILL YOUR TASKS AND THE WAY TO GOD SHALL BE PLAIN ENOUGH," AS I RECALL.
SORT OF VAGUE CONCERNING OUR SURVIVAL ISN'T IT?
UH-HUH
BEGIN YOUR BLOODY GAME, INFINITY!
AS YOU WISH!


BEHOLD THE MONOBLOC, THE CONTRACTED, PRIMORDIAL ESSENCE OF AN ENTIRE UNIVERSE, CONDENSED INTO ONE LUMP OF ULTIMATE MATTER!

IT IS SUPPORTED BY THE SEVEN SPEARS OF THE UNHOLY POLARITY, FASHIONED BY MEANS OF AN ANTI-UNIVERSAL PHYSICS I JUST..MADE UP!
YOU TWO STALWARTS WILL TAKE TURNS REMOVING THE SPEARS, UNTIL THE MONOBLOC NO LONGER BALANCES -AND IT FALLS ON THE LOSER. A VERY SIMPLE GAME OF CHANCE.
.2
SO I'VE GIVEN UP MY EARTHLY LIFE, TWO WOMEN I LOVE, FOUGHT MY WAY BACK ACROSS THE DIMENSIONS--JUST TO PLAY SUICIDAL PICK-UP STICKS?
YES. IRONIC, ISN'T IT?
COME ON! THE SOONER WE GET THIS OVER WITH--
--THE SOONER--UH MAYBE YOU'D BETTER GO FIRST

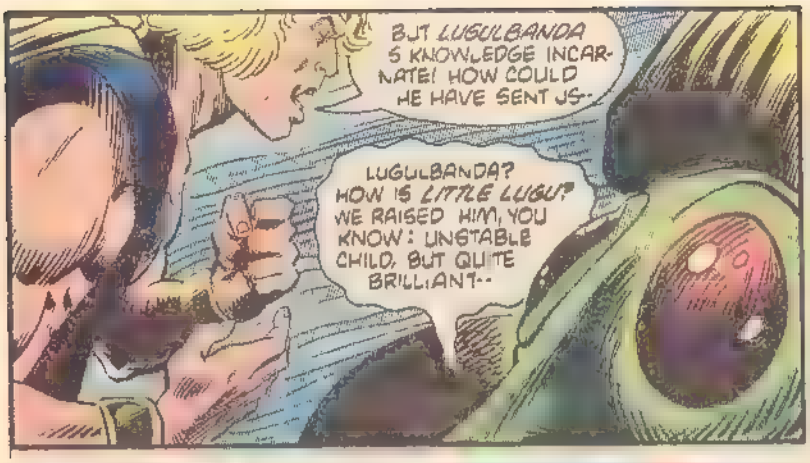
JUST PUSH THE BEAMS DOWN WITH YOUR HAND--
OK. HERE GOES!
IF HE GOES FIRST-- ONE, TWO, THREE--
WAIT! I MEAN, I CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO TAKE THE R.SK--I'LL GO FIRST!
THAT WOULD BE OUT OF CHARACTER.
CAN YOU MAKE UP YOUR M.ND BEFORE THE COSMOS EXPIRES?
BUTT OUT!
BABY NEEDS A NEW PAIR OF SHOES--
YOUR TURN, CUMULUS!

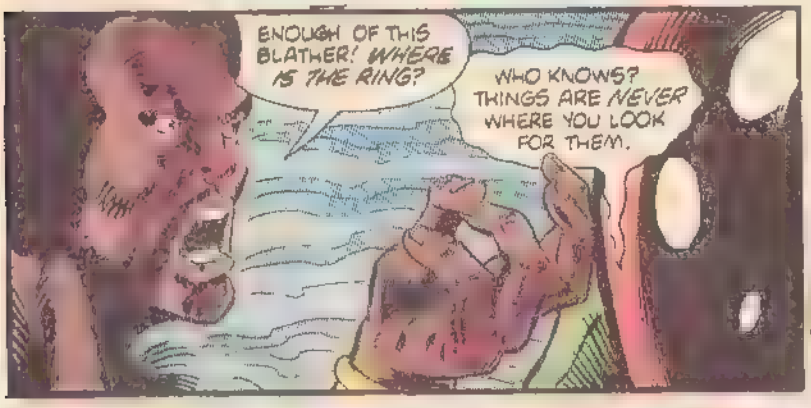
SILENTLY, ONE BY ONE, CUMULUS PRESSES DOWN A SPEAR--
--FOLLOWED BY CHAOS.
UNTIL, FINALLY--
IT'S BALANCED ON ONLY TWO? THE GAME'S RIGGED!
HE MADE UP THE PHYSICS. REMEMBER?
UH-- WHOSE TURN IS IT? I FORGOT-
IF YOU BELIEVE THE GAME IS RIGGED, YOU CAN ALWAYS CALL IT OFF--AND GO HOME WITHOUT THE RING!
IT WAS MY TURN, MY BROTHER...
FAREWELL. IT'S BEEN A PRIVILEGE.
NOW LET THIS SHAM BE ENDED! AND IT SHALL BE LORD CUMULUS WHO ENDS IT!
WHAT? CUMULUS--!

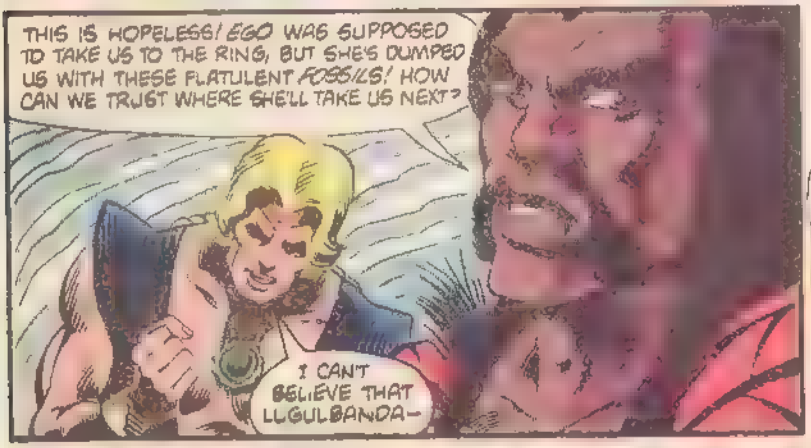
CRASH!!!
CUMULUS--NO!
YOU BASTARD! YOU KNEW HE'D DO THE NOBLE THING!
BUT YOU DIDN'T COUNT ON THIS! DIE, INFINITY!
BUT--THERE'S ONLY AN EMPTY CLOAK! HE'S FLED!
AND LEFT THE RING!
I'VE WON! BOTH THE SWORD AND THE RING ARE NOW MINE! AND WITH THEM, THE POWER OF HE WHO DREAMS!
BUT I AM THE HEIR OF HE WHO DREAMS--AND, NOW I COME INTO MY INHERITANCE! HAIL CHAOS, THE GOD!

NOW BEGINS THE AEON OF CHAOS! I SHALL REMAKE ALL OF CREATION IN MINE OWN IMAGE! I SHALL--
THAT'S ENOUGH *burp* SOMEONE TURN HIM OFF!
ALL RIGHT--
NO ONE SHALL TURN ME OFF--
WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO, BROTHER?
CUMULUS?!? BUT YOU'RE DEAD! CRUSHED
NO, I HAD A DREAM LIKE THAT, BUT
SNURTLES.
THEY'RE NOT RICAS AND THEY SPEAK--!
OH ALL THE TIME. HELLO
WAIT A SECOND! HOW COULD YOU KNOW ABOUT MY DREAM? UNLESS IT WAS MORE THAN A DREAM?
IMPOSSIBLE THEN YOU'D BE DEAD AND I'D BE--ER--
THEN WE WERE BOTH SUBJECTED TO THE SAME DREAM? SOME FOUL SORCERY IS AT WORK--AND IT COULD BE THE GAS FROM THESE--

SNJRTLES?
YES, AND WE'D LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK YOU FOR THIS SPLENDID REPAST!
I'LL BE NO ONES BREAKFAST!
BLEEAH!
HORRORS! SNURTLES ARE NOT FLESH EATERS!
WHAT MEAL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THEN?
FANTASY EATER?
YES BUT DON'T WORRY! WE'VE ONLY CONSUMED THE WASTE FROM YOUR PSYCHES. YOU'VE GOT MORE ROOM FOR SANITY NOW.
SANITY IS NEXT TO CLEANLINESS, AND CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO--
YOUR FANTASIES, OF COURSE! AND VERY RICH THEY ARE-- WE'RE ALL OF US STUFFED
--GODLINESS. WE'VE COME SEEKING THE RING OF HE WHO DREAMS. WHERE IS IT?
HE WHO DREAMS-- THE LEGENDARY DESSERT! SORRY, HE'S BUT A NAME, EVEN TO US
17

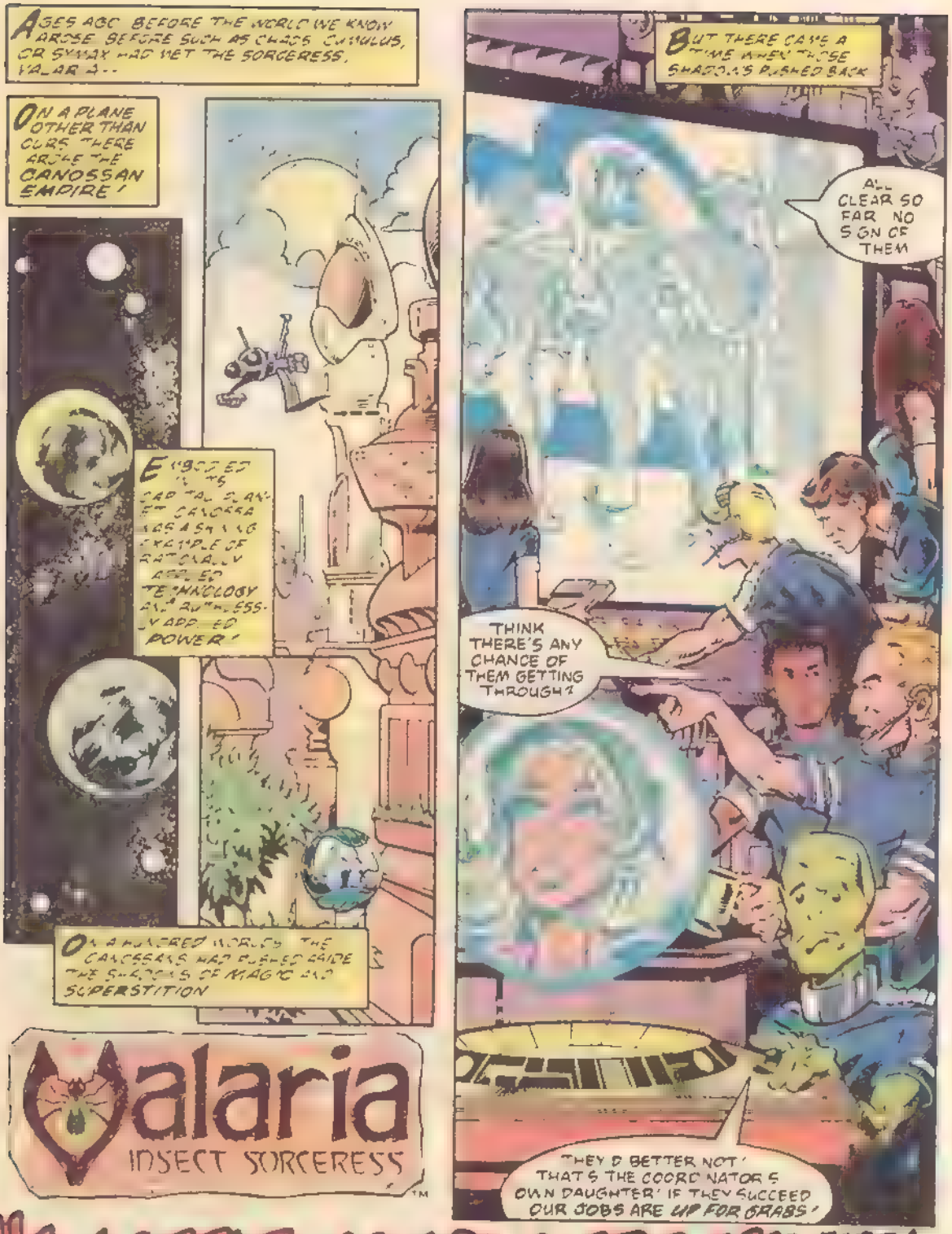






NEXT ISSUE:

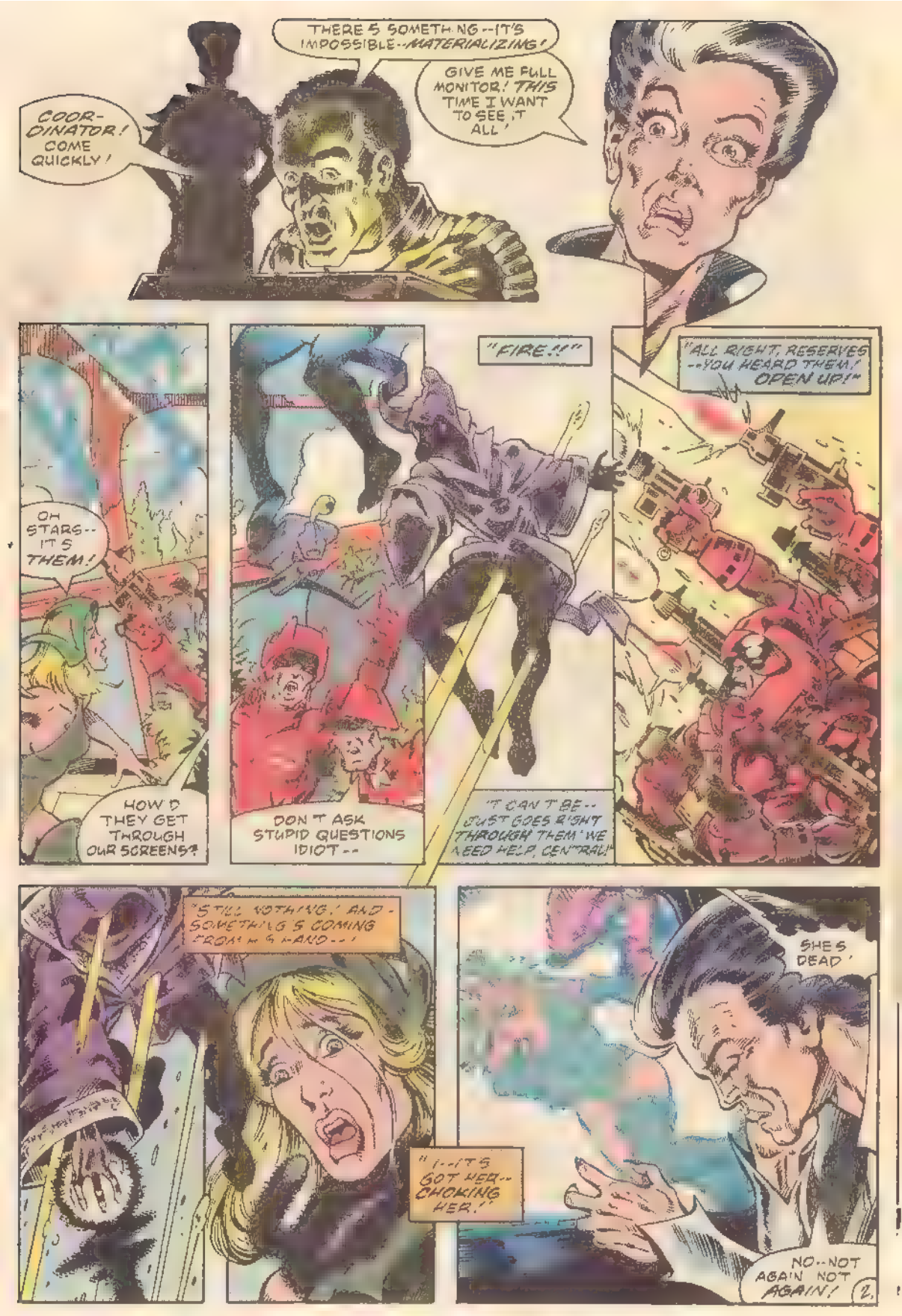
THE FINAL CURTAIN!

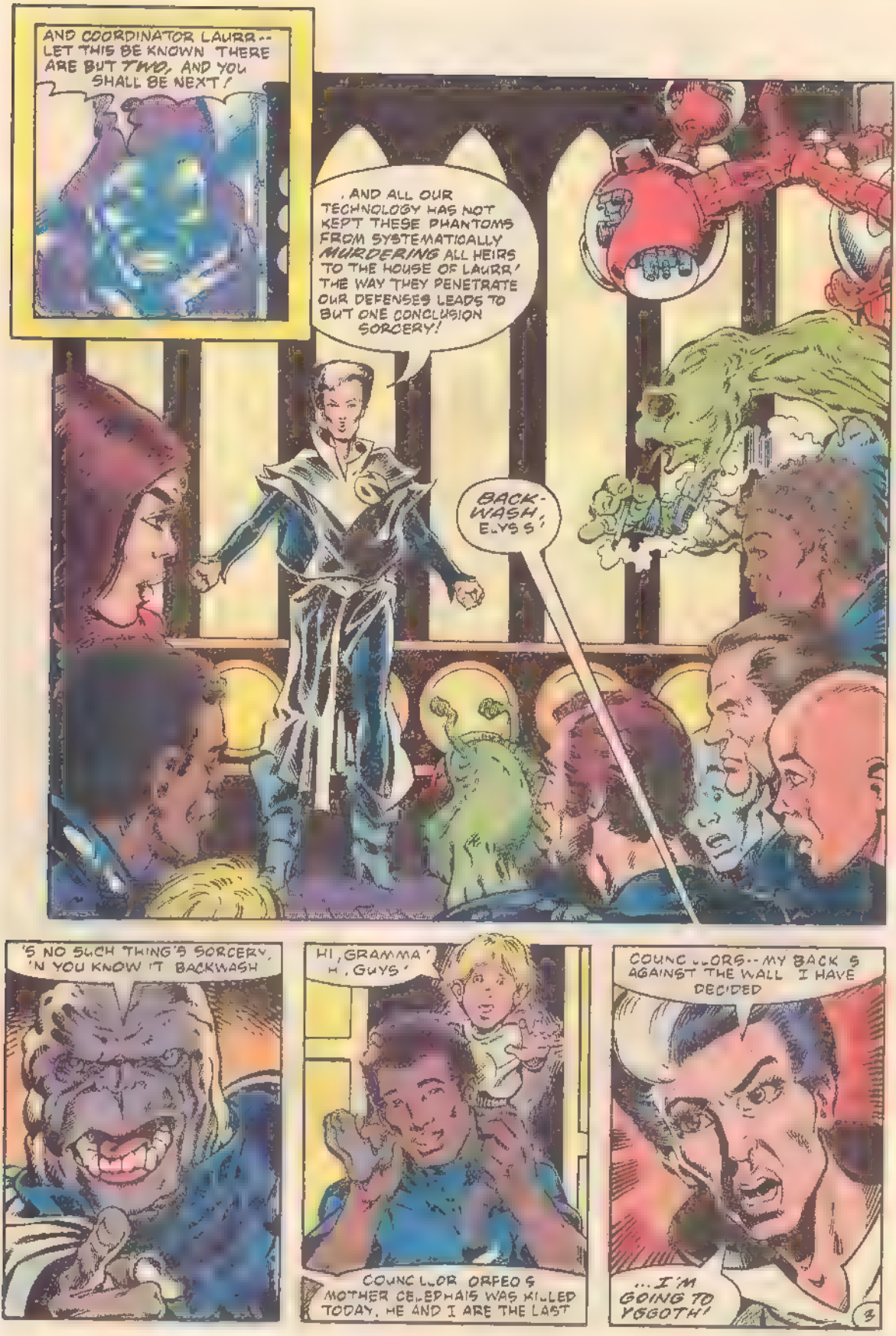


Valaria
INSECT SORCERESS

"A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE!" PART 1
BARGAIN OF YGGOTH!

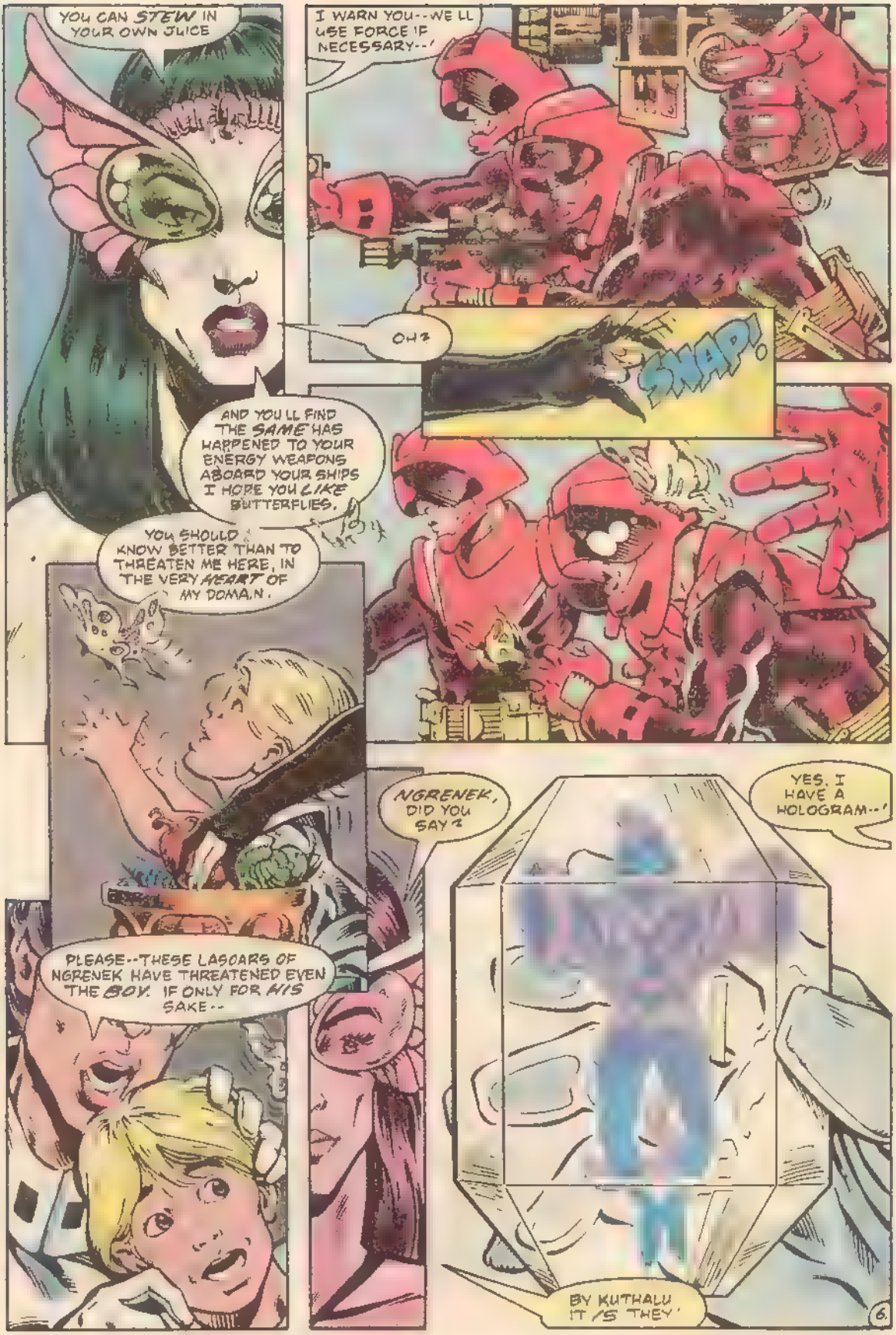
* PETER B GILLIS STORY * BILL WILLINGHAM PENCILS * BRUCE PATTERSON INKS * BASED ON THE CHARACTER CREATED BY STUART GORDON & BURY ST EDMUND
PETE IRO-LETTERS * JANICE COHEN-COLORS * MIKE GOLD-EDITOR


COOR-DINATOR! COME QUICKLY!
THERE'S SOMETHING--IT'S IMPOSSIBLE--MATERIALIZING!
GIVE ME FULL MONITOR! THIS TIME I WANT TO SEE IT ALL!
OH STARS-- IT'S THEM!
HOW'D THEY GET THROUGH OUR SCREENS?
DON'T ASK STUPID QUESTIONS IDIOT--
"FIRE!!"
"IT CAN'T BE-- JUST GOES RIGHT THROUGH THEM! WE NEED HELP, CENTRAL!"
"ALL RIGHT, RESERVES --YOU HEARD THEM! OPEN UP!"
"STILL NOTHING! AND-- SOMETHING'S COMING FROM MY HAND--!"
"I--IT'S GOT HER-- CHOKING HER!"
SHE'S DEAD!
NO--NOT AGAIN! NOT AGAIN!
2.


AND COORDINATOR LAURR -- LET THIS BE KNOWN THERE ARE BUT TWO, AND YOU SHALL BE NEXT!
, AND ALL OUR TECHNOLOGY HAS NOT KEPT THESE PHANTOMS FROM SYSTEMATICALLY MURDERING ALL HEIRS TO THE HOUSE OF LAURR! THE WAY THEY PENETRATE OUR DEFENSES LEADS TO BUT ONE CONCLUSION SORCERY!
BACK-WASH, ELYSS!
'S NO SUCH THING'S SORCERY, 'N YOU KNOW IT BACKWASH
HI, GRAMMA! H, GUYS!
COUNC LLOR ORFEO'S MOTHER CELEPHAIS WAS KILLED TODAY. HE AND I ARE THE LAST
COUNC LLORS -- MY BACK'S AGAINST THE WALL I HAVE DECIDED
... I'M GOING TO YGGOTH!
3

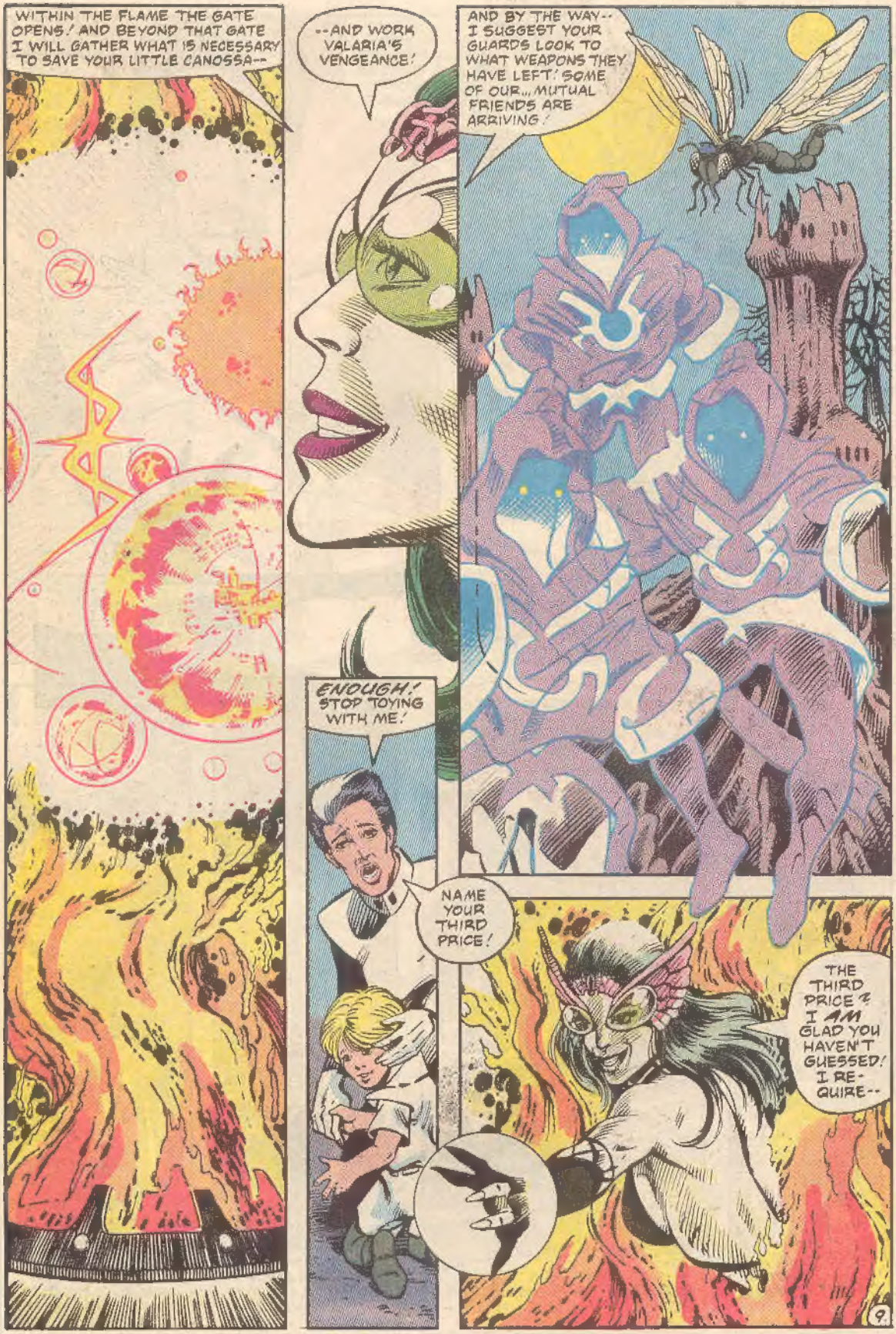
YGGOTH! BUT THAT'S UNTHINKABLE!
BUT WHY, ELYSIS?!
BECAUSE, COUNCILLOR, ONLY THE UNTHINKABLE IS LEFT.
AND SO THE IMPERIAL FLAGSHIP SERVORUM DEPARTS FROM CANOSSA UNDER HEAVY ESCORT
BEFORE LONG THEY ARE NORBIT ABOUT A PLANET AT THE OUTER EDGE OF CANOSSAN SPACE
YGGOTH WAS ONCE A PRETTY WORLD, BUT NOW IT IS SCARRED WITH GREAT BLACK BLOTCHES ACROSS ITS SURFACE SCARRED BY VOLCANIC ACTIVITY
YOU'D CALL IT THAT, I SUPPOSE. WELCOME TO IT
WHAT A DUMP!
YOU SURE THIS USED TO BE THE CAPITAL CITY?
BEHIND ME, COORDINATOR!

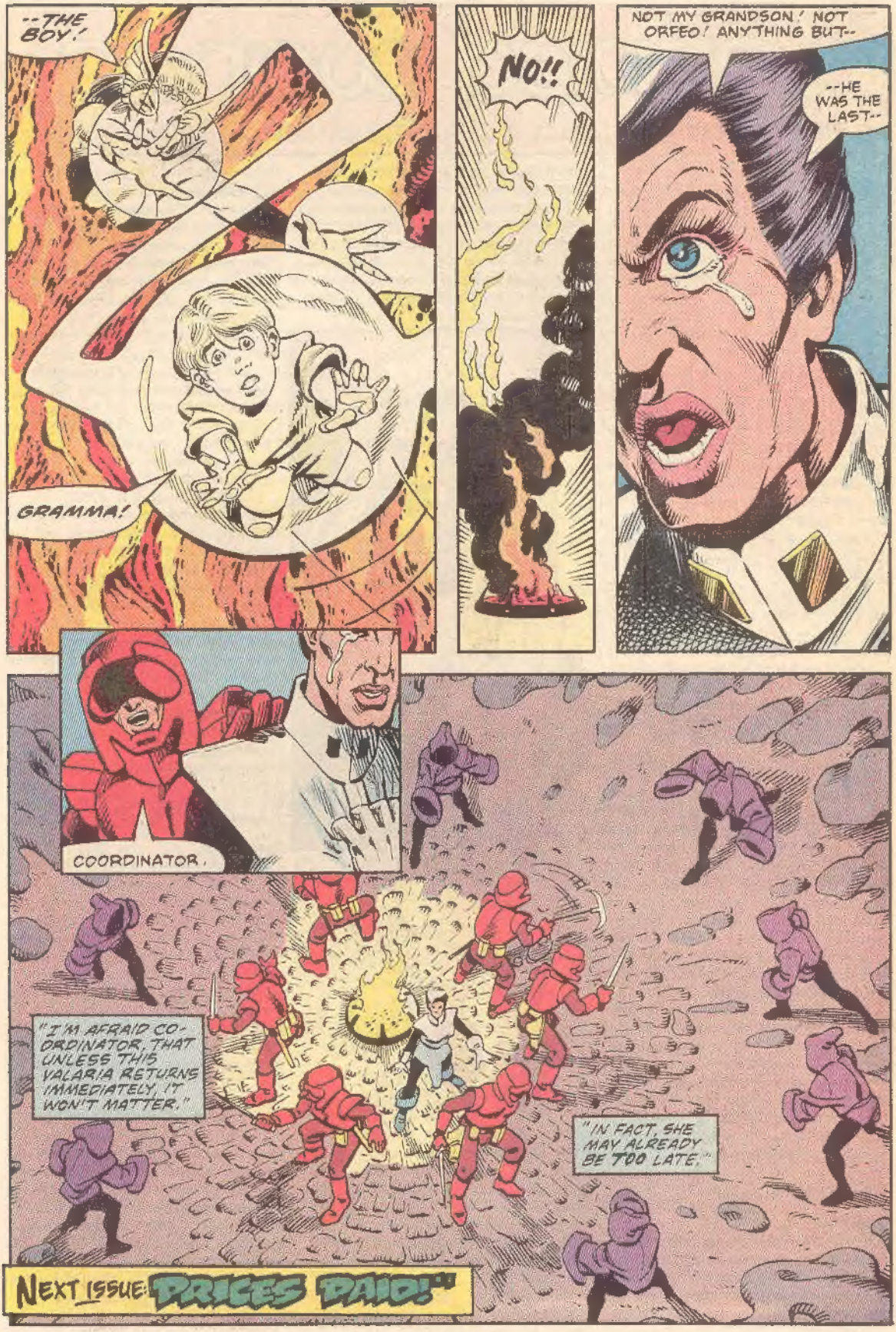
NO NEED FOR THAT I'M ALWAYS GLAD WHEN SOMEONE TAKES PITY ON MY LONELINESS
BEING HIGH PRIESTESS OF A DEPOPULATED WORLD CAN BE QUITE BORING
YOU KNOW WELL, VALAR A. WITH HOW MUCH RELUCTANCE I COME HERE--
WHO'S THAT, GRAMMA?
RELUCTANCE ELYSIS LAURR?
MERELY BECAUSE IT WAS YOU WHO ORDERED THE THERMONUCLEAR STRIKE ON MY PLANET THIRTY YEARS AGO?
VALARIA--PLEASE! YOU WERE A DANGER TO CANOSSA THEN--BUT WE FACE A GREATER DANGER NOW! HELP US
HELP YOU? HELP YOU?!


YOU CAN STEW IN YOUR OWN JUICE
I WARN YOU--WE'LL USE FORCE IF NECESSARY--!
OH?
SNAP!
AND YOU'LL FIND THE SAME HAS HAPPENED TO YOUR ENERGY WEAPONS ABOARD YOUR SHIPS I HOPE YOU LIKE BUTTERFLIES.
YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO THREATEN ME HERE, IN THE VERY HEART OF MY DOMAIN.
NGRENEK, DID YOU SAY?
YES, I HAVE A HOLOGRAM--!
PLEASE--THESE LASCARS OF NGRENEK HAVE THREATENED EVEN THE BOY. IF ONLY FOR HIS SAKE--
BY KUTHALU IT IS THEY!
6.

I HAVE BUSINESS WITH THOSE OF NORENEK.
YOUR PALTRY FUSION DEVICES WOULD NEVER HAVE EVEN TOUCHED YGGOTH--BUT FOR THE FACT THAT THE LASCARS LAUNCHED A MAJOR ATTACK ON US AS WELL, WEAKENING OUR SPELLS TO WHERE WE WERE VULNERABLE EVEN TO YOU! THEY SHALL PAY FOR THAT!
I WILL HELP YOU LADY LAURR--BUT MY PRICE SHALL BE THREE THINGS!
LET'S HEAR THEM
FIRST--ONE TRILLION CREDITS
I EXPECTED AS MUCH. GIVE IT TO HER
AND MEANWHILE IN ORBIT ABOARD THE CANOSSAN SHIPS.
WITHOUT AN ALARM BEING SOUNDED, OR A SENSOR BEING TRIPPED--
..THE CREW'S BEGIN TO DIE

FOR MY SECOND PRICE, I ASK FOR SOMETHING A BIT MORE-- PERSONAL ELYSIS
GET AWAY FROM ME!
IN A MOMENT--!
BUT MY SECOND PRICE IS-- SOME OF YOUR BLOOD!
OW! MY HAND-- MY GLOVE--!
AH! THIS SHOULD DO NICELY!
COORDINATOR! OUR SHIPS ARE UNDER ATTACK ONE DOES NOT ANSWER!
ALL RIGHT, VALARIA-- STOP PLAYING! I AGREE TO YOUR TERMS-- JUST HURRY UP!
DON'T GET FLUSTERED, MILADY! VENGEANCE, LIKE ALL GOOD THINGS, COMES IN-- ITS OWN TIME!
AND NOW, OBSERVE A PARADOX! BLOOD IS A LIQUID-- IT CAN QUENCH MANY A THIRST!
AND YET IT CAN FAN A FLAME TO GREAT VEHEMENCE! BEHOLD!


WITHIN THE FLAME THE GATE OPENS! AND BEYOND THAT GATE I WILL GATHER WHAT IS NECESSARY TO SAVE YOUR LITTLE CANOSSA--
--AND WORK VALARIA'S VENGEANCE!
AND BY THE WAY-- I SUGGEST YOUR GUARDS LOOK TO WHAT WEAPONS THEY HAVE LEFT! SOME OF OUR... MUTUAL FRIENDS ARE ARRIVING!
ENOUGH! STOP TOYING WITH ME!
NAME YOUR THIRD PRICE!
THE THIRD PRICE? I AM GLAD YOU HAVEN'T GUESSED! I REQUIRE--
9


--THE BOY!
GRAMMA!
NO!!
NOT MY GRANDSON! NOT ORFEO! ANYTHING BUT--
--HE WAS THE LAST--
COORDINATOR.
"I'M AFRAID CO-ORDINATOR, THAT UNLESS THIS VALARIA RETURNS IMMEDIATELY, IT WON'T MATTER."
"IN FACT, SHE MAY ALREADY BE TOO LATE."
NEXT ISSUE: "PRICES PAID!"

warped words

%FIRST COMICS, 1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

Dear First Comics:

What I'm interested in knowing is, where would you place Lord Cumulus in the strength and power department, compared to Marvel's Thor and DC's Doctor Fate? Where would he place among the other two companies' power line-ups?

Ron Watts
6926 Koster Avenue #8
Van Nuys, CA 91405

First of all, Ron, I think we have to remember Lord Cumulus's sundry powers have yet to be fully developed. Even now, towards the end of his initial quest, Cumulus still is a hero-in-training, without the motivation that comes from having been successful and understanding the long-range responsibilities of being a superhero.

Peter Gillis and I discussed your question, and we came to the following conclusions:

Thor is almost the strongest hero in the Marvel universe — second, obviously, to the Hulk — and Cumulus isn't that strong. At least, not yet.

Doctor Fate is about as powerful as he wants to be — one of those mystical heroes that really can't be stopped by anything resembling ordinary forces. Cumulus's powers are finite.

We think the one hero closest to Cumulus in power and strength is The Thing (hear that, John Byrne?). Peter points out the fact that DC really doesn't have any major superheroes who have massive strength and power going for 'em (in other words, more powerful than non-powered characters like Batman or Green Arrow) who are less powerful than Superman — and Cumulus isn't as powerful as Superman. At least, not yet.

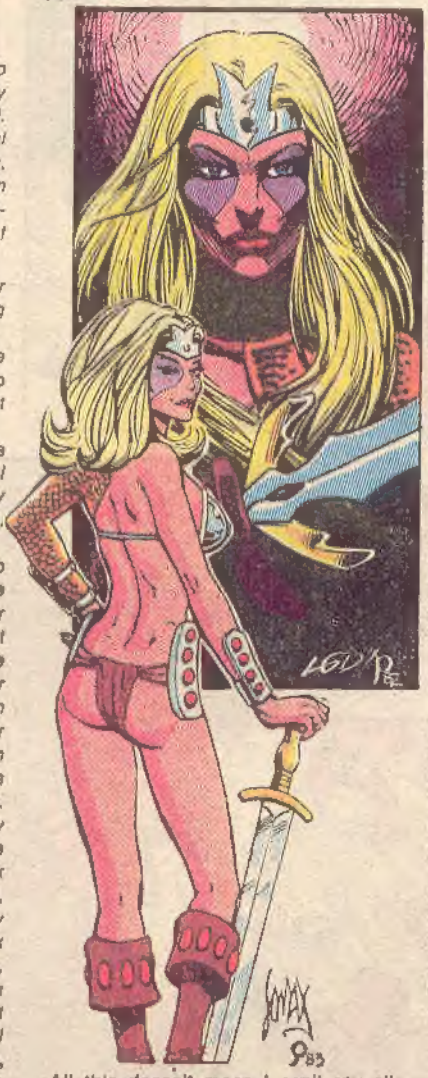
Now that we've offended continuity freaks over at Marvel, let me stir up a little havoc in our offices as well. I do not think Cumulus really is as powerful as Sargon, although he could be once he is totally comfortable with his gifts. I do not think Cumulus is as smart as Chaos — but, then again, Chaos is crazy, which is a disadvantage. Cumulus is the strongest hero in the First Comics universe, but I don't think he's as powerful as **E-Man**, *who is totally comfortable with his heroic role.*

Aren't you glad you asked?

Dear Mike:

It has been one of my most ardent fantasies that there would one day be a comics publishing company outside of New York (I never expressed myself on the subject to my friends, who fantasize about Rachel Ward and Jennifer Beales). Thanks for making my life complete.

I must admit that I was one of the few Chicagoans who had never seen the Warp plays, but your adaptation has me enthralled. While I'm at it, the Chaos special was all-around fantastic, and the background information much appreciated.



All this doesn't mean I can't say all sorts of good things about the Ostrander/Deisol Sargon back-up. The alien bar scene was hilarious stuff, and Lenin's artwork was even better than the Sargon tale in your first issue. I'm looking forward to their work together on Starslayer.

Another thing . . . nice of you to explain that copyright info (in regards to T.M. Maple's letter — just what is that guy's real name, anyway?). One of the reasons that I enjoy your lettercols is that they haven't devolved into hype boxes. I think that it is important that a reader can compose an intelligent letter, and maybe ask a few questions, without getting a reply like: Hey, glad you liked the issue, if you thought that was something, wait until next issue, in the meantime though, don't forget to pick up the latest Copak The Librarian, you'll be glad you did!!!

Best of luck for the future, and here's hoping that in about ten years we'll be seeing the first issue of The History of the First Comics Universe.

Wayne Sallee
3903 West 85th Street
Chicago, IL 60652

Here's hoping that in about ten years, we won't need to straighten out the history of the First Comics universe. (Boy, aren't we getting catty today?)

We do our share of hyping Wayne — and if you think the **Warp** *lettercols are humble, wait 'till you see this month's issue of* **Jon Sable, Freelance** *— but we don't have to go out of our way to hype when our letter writers do it for us! Thanks for the* **Starslayer** *plug!*

I don't know who T.M. Maple is, outside of being just about the best letter writer in the business. We'd love to send him one of our fabled Advance Photocopies, but somehow I don't think sending a package to "T.M. Maple," General Delivery, Toronto, Ontario, would do us any good.

Dear Editor,

Warp #5 was yet another fine issue. Peter Gillis is showing excellent skills — to my knowledge, this is the finest comic book scripting he has ever produced. The book's biggest weaknesses have nothing to do with the art or scripting, which has been of high quality.

This title's primary weaknesses involve the names of the characters and the problem of durability. Most of the codenames of these characters lack either originality, flare, or flow — these later two criticisms especially apply to Cumulus.

My other problem is that I don't exactly understand what will happen when the plays are adapted. Don't many of the lead characters die in the finale? I like Sargon, but I can't see that she has the power to back up her auspicious title of "Mistress of War.". She seems not to be in a league with the likes of Cumulus, Chaos, and Valaria. I'm hoping that the back up series will demonstrate Sargon's fullest power potential and greater power level. I would like to see her become the

permanent wielder of the Sword of Light and the Shield of Night.

Wallace Lee Hopkins
Box 428
Glen Carbon, IL 62034

With apologies to Mr. Sallee, the issue of what happens to our heroes at the end of the adaptation will be resolved at the end of the adaptation — and the adaptation ends next issue.

I don't agree with your assessment of Sargon's powers — I think she has the power to hold any comic book together, and we're getting a lot of mail requesting we spin her off into her own book. If her abilities didn't impress you in the four back-up stories we've published to date, let me slip something out a bit early: that resolution of the adaptation you're (properly) so concerned about involves Sargon, to say the least.

And until the issue after next, the least is all we'll say.

Dear Mike,

I am continuing to enjoy Warp a great deal. The only thing that would improve the book would be book length features.

Wesley M. Allison
Box 149
Blue Diamond, NV 89004

We just called up Frank Brunner and told him he has to do 28 page book-lengthers from now on, and he had a heart attack and died. And it's all your fault. You should be hearing from Jan Brunner's lawyers any day now. He had kids, too, Wesley.

Dear Mike,

I hope the Warp plays are revived soon and come to Boston, for I find the whole concept fascinating. Peter Gillis and Frank Brunner, a respectful doff of the hat to you for Warp. It is classic art with great twisting plots, and I for one applaud the product achieved. I think you've portrayed very effectively the total confusion in Lord Cumulus' head. Chaos, and his former aide-de-camp Symax, are very original bastards.

Can I be honest? Sargon is a knockout as a female hero; she's truly sexy while staying real.

Soo . . . Mike Gold, you're a lucky man. I'm sure that being editor of the new and great First Comics is a hectic task, at times even wearing — but your efforts are more than appreciated, they're embraced with enthusiasm. If you screw up, don't worry, we'll let you know.

Dave Smallee
Newbury Comics II
Boston, MA

The plays have been revived, Dave, but you're going to have to locomote down to Motown to see them this summer. They're still playing at the Attic Theater in Detroit, where they've been since last May.

NEXT ISSUE: The first **Warp** saga concludes. The universe concludes. Will Cumulus, Chaos, Sargon and/or Lugulbanda conclude along with it?

Frank Brunner, Peter Gillis and **Mike Gustovich** provide the ultimate finish to the comics saga twelve years in the making.

And — since we're on the topic of finishes — the two-part Valaria prequel by **Gillis** and **Bill Willingham** also comes to a stunning conclusion. Sort of makes you wonder what we're going to do in **Warp** #10, doesn't it?

Ah, but *that* would be telling . . .

— Mike Gold

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